

To: Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

From: Sue Bailey, Alliance Resource Center

Adult Resource Alliance of Yellowstone County

1505 Avenue D, Billings MT

406-259-5212

sueb@allianceyc.org

Re: Draft Bill for Creating a Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS)

I would like to support the current draft bill for creation of a Montana WINGS committee. I hope the final bill will:

1. Specify that the Chief Justice appoints the WINGS committee members.
2. Specify that the WINGS will have representation from a variety of statewide stakeholders with representatives from Judicial, Medical, Senior and Developmental Disability advocacy groups and existing Guardianship volunteers and professionals. In addition to the variety of service providers represented, the committee would also want to have diversity in representation of both rural and urban and eastern and western area services.
3. The WINGS committee should also have oversight of conservatorship issues which will be addressed after the WINGS committee establishes state-wide Guardianship ethics and standards, training and educational outreach.
4. Include an appropriation for grants to fund the establishment of the WINGS committee, support of a 0.5 FTE to provide support to the committee, and funds to allow face to face meetings quarterly and additional web calls/ conference call in the remaining months.
5. Include additional appropriations to support grants awarded by the WINGS committee to existing volunteer guardianship councils to expand their services and to create new guardianship options across the state.

As a member of the Voice for Seniors Guardianship Committee, I am encouraged by the Interim Committee's support of this critical issue. I believe this bill will start a very positive movement to establish a state-wide Guardianship/Conservatorship program that will create a means to solve the Guardianship problem the state's citizens and services are already experiencing, provide protection for our most vulnerable citizens, and give all our citizen the comfort of knowing aging will be a supported and cared for experience in the State of Montana .